

UNIVERSAL WALK FLOW

A structured, replicable, dependable and inclusive four-stage nature connection model supporting sensory engagement, personal meaning-making, and gentle community integration for people of all abilities.



1. INTRODUCTORY CONNECTION STAGE

“Slow down, arrive, awaken the senses.”

Purpose: Ease transition from busy daily life into a more relaxed and embodied sense of the world, connected to the natural surroundings

Key Practices:

- Frame the walk: Clarify purpose, pacing, and permissions. Emphasize non-judgement, openness, and choice.
- Awaken the senses: Offer simple sensory invitations like, for example, listen to a sound, touch a tree, observe light patterns, what smells do you notice?
- Slow the pace: Encourage slower walking, deeper breaths, and slowing down of body and mind.

Tip: Use language that invites presence without pressure. Normalize different levels of participation.

2. MEANINGFUL CONNECTION STAGE

“Interact with the forest, find your own unique way to connect with it.”

Purpose: Deepen engagement with nature through multisensory and self-directed exploration.

Key Practices:

- Sensory exploration: Include touch, barefoot walking, or feeling sun/wind/water or any other beings that feel alive on that day. Adapt the invitations to your group considering safety and comfort.
- Personal meaning: Support participants to find their own unique relationships by offering open-ended prompts like, for example, “Find a place that feels welcoming” or “What’s catching your attention?”
- Flexible formats: Allow solo, paired, or small group invitations in a way that supports autonomy and agency.

Tip: Be adaptive. Invite curiosity without controlling outcomes.

3. SOLO WALK STAGE

“Be with yourself, be with nature.”

Purpose: Allow space for quiet reflection and integration.

Key Practices:

- Offer solitude: Invite participants to choose a space to rest, observe, draw, journal, or simply be on their own. Depending on the population that you are guiding, consider if a solo invitation is appropriate or not.
- Minimal guidance: Support self-direction; check safety while preserving spaciousness for participants. Consider if this appropriate for your group, as described above.

Tip: Normalize stillness. Let silence and inner processing be enough..

4. CLOSING STAGE

“Return, reflect, share and celebrate.”

Purpose: Gently transition back into group presence and daily life with shared meaning and closure.

Key Practices:

- Group reflection: Invite voluntary sharing with prompts like, for example, “What stayed with you?” or “What are you taking from today?”
- Symbolic closure: Leave a nature offering, share a word of gratitude, or engage in a simple closing gesture.
- Grounding ritual: End with shared tea, snack to foster community and reorientation.

Tip: Create inclusive space where all expressions (or silences) are welcome.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE UNIVERSAL WALK MODEL

- **Inclusivity:** Modify invitations for different bodies, minds, languages, and cultures.
- **Trauma-Informed:** Respect autonomy, choice, and emotional pacing.
- **Sensory Awareness:** Consider all senses; offer options to engage through whichever feels safest and most accessible.
- **Relational Field:** Nature is not a backdrop, it is an active participant in this process. Invite relationships, not just observations.